# New liquor license initiative aims to boost San Francisco’s Union Square



State senator Scott Wiener is spearheading a new initiative aimed at enhancing San Francisco’s Union Square neighbourhood through the introduction of 20 additional liquor licenses. Partnering with San Francisco Mayor Daniel Lurie, Wiener seeks to stimulate economic recovery in the area, which has experienced significant challenges in recent years.

Historically, Wiener has championed policies to refine the liquor licensing process as a means to enliven San Francisco's downtown. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he played a pivotal role in easing regulations that permitted alcohol sales in parklets and created "entertainment zones" where businesses could serve to-go cocktails during special street events. This current proposal continues his efforts to reinvigorate local commerce by allowing bars and restaurants to flourish.

In a recent press release, Wiener expressed optimism about the potential benefits of this initiative, stating, “A truly spectacular array of street fairs, special events, and new small businesses have breathed life back into our downtown over the past year. Supporting our nightlife scene - including our bars and restaurants - is critical to continuing that strong recovery.” He underscored that affordable licenses would facilitate new establishments, drawing both tourists and locals back to the downtown area, and contributing to a vibrant, bustling community.

Lurie echoed this sentiment, emphasising the necessity for a robust downtown, remarking, “To get San Francisco’s economy going again, downtown needs to be at full strength. Now, we are building on the success of last weekend with permanent solutions for this neighbourhood.”

The proposed liquor licenses, specified as “low-cost” by Wiener, require clarification as there is no official designation for such licenses within California's framework of 99 types of liquor permits, with the standard license costing around $20,000. However, resales of existing licenses can command prices as high as $200,000, creating a significant barrier for new entrants in the market. This proposed legislation aims to create 20 new normal-priced licenses strictly for the Union Square vicinity.

These licenses would be confined to a designated “hospitality zone” within Union Square, with the San Francisco Board of Supervisors tasked with establishing specific boundaries. The intention behind this initiative is to attract new restaurants and bars, ultimately generating increased foot traffic and energy in the downtown area.

While the proposal has garnered attention as a potential remedy for the region's economic struggles, questions remain regarding its effectiveness in addressing issues such as the retail exodus impacting Union Square. Despite these reservations, the introduction of 20 additional bars may provide a partial solution to filling vacant storefronts and revitalising the once-thriving district.

As San Francisco continues to navigate the complexities of post-pandemic recovery, this proposed change to liquor licensing could represent a pivotal shift for both the hospitality industry and the broader economy in the Union Square neighbourhood.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://sd11.senate.ca.gov/news/senator-wiener-mayor-lurie-introduce-legislation-boost-nightlife-economic-recovery-downtown-sf> - This URL supports the claim that Senator Scott Wiener and Mayor Daniel Lurie are introducing legislation to boost nightlife in downtown San Francisco by creating 20 new liquor licenses. It highlights their efforts to revitalize the area through enhanced nightlife.
* <https://sd11.senate.ca.gov/news/senator-wiener-mayor-lurie-introduce-legislation-boost-nightlife-economic-recovery-downtown-sf> - This URL also corroborates the historical context of Wiener's efforts to refine liquor licensing processes and create entertainment zones to enliven San Francisco's downtown.
* <https://www.sf.gov/news--mayor-breed-announces-legislation-create-four-new-entertainment-zones-part-continued-support> - This URL supports the broader initiative of creating entertainment zones in San Francisco, which aligns with Wiener's past efforts to enhance nightlife and economic activity.
* <https://www.sf.gov/news--mayor-breed-announces-legislation-create-four-new-entertainment-zones-part-continued-support> - It further explains how entertainment zones, similar to the proposed hospitality zone in Union Square, are part of ongoing efforts to boost downtown events and economic recovery.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This URL is the source of the original article discussing Senator Wiener's initiative to enhance Union Square through additional liquor licenses.